Women Who Changed America

Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) was respected in Massachusetts Bay Colony, but her audacity as a woman conducting religious discussions caused her to be tried for heresy and banished from the colony. Religious freedom later became a cornerstone of civil rights in the U.S.

Catherine Beecher (1800-1878), was popular writer who argued that women should be trained as teachers. She was pivotal in founding several women's colleges, and lived to see teaching become an acceptable profession for women.

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)** were prominent leaders of the 72-year movement to win the right to vote for women. The combination of Anthony's sharp political instincts with Stanton's forceful writing made them a formidable team for 50 years.

Harriet Tubman (1820-1913) escaped slavery, then courageously returned to the South 19 times, leading over 300 others to freedom. During the Civil War, she was a spy and scout for the Union Army.

Sarah Winnemucca (1844-1891), a Paiute Indian, wrote extensively, lobbied Congress, and traveled across the country lecturing on the terrible treatment of Indians by U.S. government agents.

Jane Addams (1860-1935) founded America's first settlement house to help poor immigrant families. In the process, she established social work as a new and respected field for educated women. For her international activism to end warfare, Addams was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862-1931) boldly reported on the lynching of Blacks in the South through newspaper articles and in her book, *A Red Record*. The furor generated by her well-documented reports started a nationwide anti-lynching campaign.

Concha Ortiz y Pino de Kleven (b. 1912) founded craft schools during the Depression, providing employment for hundreds. At age 24 she was elected to the New Mexico state legislature, the first Latina to serve at that level.

Frances Perkins (1880-1965) was the first woman appointed to the Cabinet of a U.S. President. As Secretary of Labor, she was instrumental in shaping legislation to create unemployment insurance, Social Security, and the minimum wage.

Maria Martinez (1887-1980) rediscovered the ancient Tewa Indian techniques of firing polychrome and "black on black" pottery. She taught others in her tribe and the Tewa achieved economic self-sufficiency and international fame through their beautiful ceramics.

Rosa Parks (b. 1913) is known as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement." In 1955, she was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. The resulting bus boycott led to the desegregation of all public facilities in America.

Rachel Carson (1907-1964) researched the damage being done to the Earth by pesticides, and published *Silent Spring* in 1962. The book catapulted environ mental issues to the forefront of public consciousness, becoming the foundation for the modern environmental movement.

Gloria Steinem (b. 1934) is a vital force in the contemporary women's movement, was a journalist, speaker, author, and organizer for women's issues. Since 1972, Steinem has been editor and contributing writer for *Ms.* magazine, which she co-founded to inspire women to take control of their own lives and work for equality in all areas of society.

Patsy Mink (b. 1927), a feminist activist, was the first Asian-American elected to Congress, in 1964. She wrote the legislation for the Women's Education Equity Act, and co-founded the National Women's Political Caucus.

Toni Morrison (b. 1931) developed a unique, narrative style in the writing of her six novels, play, and two volumes of essays. For her masterful explor-ation of the complex issues in the lives of African Americans, Morrison has won both the Pulitzer Prize (for *Beloved*) and the Nobel Prize for literature.

Celebrate Women's History

Learning the true stories of women's history has a positive effect on just about everyone. For girls and women, these empowering stories from America's shared past generate feelings of personal strength and new possibilities. Correspondingly, boys and men gain increased respect for women by knowing more about their individual accomplishments, and about the female experience across time. Celebrating women's lives – filled with courage, caring and contributions – is valuable for us all.

Women's history is filled with women whose lives and work have transformed American communities and the ideas of their day. Women's history is also about countless women who have lived out their lives quietly at the center of their families. Together, these women represent many and varied cultures, faiths, aspirations and beliefs. And, they have all contributed significantly to building our society and culture.

History looks different when the contributions of women are included as routinely as those of men. When we see history in this new way, it is as if we are looking through a wide-angle lens. More of the picture comes into view. By adjusting our focus, details that were missing become clear. An expanded view of history lets us see ourselves and our connection to the past differently. When we see history in a new way, we can see new possibilities for the future as well.